

No 7

THE
EXCELLENCY
OF
REASON,
No ARGUMENT against
THE
WISDOM
OF
BELIEVING:
OR,
A Censure of the *Remarks*
UPON
Mr. *YOUNG*'s *Discourses*.

L O N D O N,

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T H E
 Excellency of R E A S O N,
 No A R G U M E N T against
 T H E
 Wisdom of B E L I E V I N G.

WE know it has been the fate of some very good Men, first to be cloathed in Bear-skins, and then brought forth to be baited for Beasts. And just in such a manner the Author of the *Remarks* has treated Mr. Y----'s *Sermons*, loading them with Charges to which they have no more alliance than a Man has to a Bear.

But it seems, something was to be said ; and not much matter what, so it squar'd with the Old Rule, viz.) *Calumniate boldly, and 'tis a great chance but some of it will stick.*

For the sake of Truth, I am willing to try whether Aspersions, so Dilute as these, will stick or no.

I. The First Charge is, *That Mr. Y. has confounded the Notion of Wisdom.*

In Answer to this, we must observe, That it is an easier task to adapt Things to Notions, than Notions to Things; and to form a Scheme of what we would have them to be, than to give a just Account of what they are: And by the advantage of this Method, the Author of the *Remarks* has found That at home, which (if Holy *Job* be not out, chap. 28. 13.) he might have travell'd over all the Land of the Living, and not have found (viz.) a Humane Wisdom, that is, a True Wisdom, secure from deception and erring, and qualify'd to be a sure and safe Guide in Matters of Religion.

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Mr. Y. on the other hand, thought himself obliged to represent *Humane Wisdom*, not as it might be conceiv'd in a fond Idea, but as it might be met with in Reality and Fact: He thought it absurd to imagine that *Humane Wisdom* was exempt from the Teint of *Humane Corruption*; and therefore he represents it not only as Limited and Deceivable, (for thus it was in the state of its Primitive
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Excellency) but likewise as prone to Errour, from the Influence of Conceit, Partiality, Interest, Complexion, Education, and several other Prejudices; which though they made it more bold to undertake, yet still they made it more weak and unable to discharge the Office of a Guide.

Mr. Y. thought likewise, that when, by a number of Instances (beginning as high as Paradise it self) it appeared that multitudes of Men, who had as large a stock of Natural Wisdom or Reason as any others can pretend to, had miscarry'd in Religion, and swerv'd from Truth, with all their Reason about them: And that since it was *Reason* that form'd their Schemes, *Reason* that furnish'd their Arguments, *Reason* that both persuaded them to, and sustained them in their Errours; *Reason* might have been allow'd to bear some share of the blame, and their Miscarriages might have serv'd for a caution to others how they trusted the same Conduct: But since the *Remarker* is not pleas'd to have it so, I will a while suspend the Dispute, to congratulate him for Two or Three Issues.

I. For

1. For that he has given Men such a comfortable Evidence, That *they ought to believe themselves Wise*. For as this is a very Popular Office, so it cannot but bring him in an heap of Thanks.

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2. For that he has fortify'd *Reason* with such Rules as perhaps were wanting heretofore, and from which the Sons of *Adam* may take new Courage to confide in themselves: For although our First Parent miscarry'd through the Deceivableness of his *Reason*; yet after such Rules prescrib'd for *Reason* to proceed by, there is little fear of its mistaking so again.

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3. For that he has tempted some to wish that He himself had been placed in Paradise, because he would assuredly have kept Possession there; for he would have baffled the Deceiver, and *refuted his Suggestions by most certain and substantial Reasons*; which *Adam*, it seems, had not presence of Mind to consider.

But to come to the Merits of the Cause, (which the *Remarker* has thought fit wholly to avoid) ---- I will suppose *Reason* to be as *Excellent* as himself can conceive it, and yet

yet this founds it no Title to be a Guide in Religion : For had Reason been sufficient to be a Guide in these Matters, what need had God to furnish us with another ? If Reason could possibly have led us into the Knowledge of what we are to Do and Believe, God would certainly have spared the Mission both of his Servants and his Son : But if Revelation therefore be appointed for our Guide, (and who is so bold as to deny it ?) what have we to alledge why Reason should pretend to usurp its Character, and invade its Office ? The truth is, This other Guide that God hath vouchsafed us, the *Remarker* seems not to like by any means : For he never mentions Revelation, but (as if it were Thistles in his Mouth) he drops it again immediately ; nor does he ever expressly own it under its Character of a Guide : Which is a greater Affront to Providence, than Mr. Y. ever offer'd to Reason : But of this there will perhaps be occasion to speak more by and by.

In the mean time, the Summ of this First Charge amounts to thus much, (*viz.*) That Mr. Y. has confounded the Notion of Wisdom ; and if he has done so, it is only by

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asserting, That Humane Wisdom is obnoxious to those Infirmities that are inseparable from Humane Nature : And if the *Remarker* has clear'd the Notion, it is only by ascribing to it a Property that belongs incommunicably to the Spirit of God, which is, *to guide us into Divine Truth*, St. *John* 16. 13. And let the Indifferent judge whether the Notion be not well cleared.

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II. The Second Charge is, *That Mr. Y. has obscur'd the Notion of Faith.*

And the Reasons assign'd are, (1.) Because he opposes Faith to Reason. (2.) Because he sets up Faith for a Guide. (3.) Because he requires Faith without Reason.

Now Mr. Y. has done nothing of all this ; but this Gentleman had certainly Reason to say so : And this is a Proof of one Advantage those Men have who pretend to follow Reason, (*viz.*) If Reason lead them not into Truth, it will lead them into Falshoods that are more pleasing ; and this will give better content.

Mr. Y. (on the contrary) never opposes Faith to Reason ; but only complains of those
others

others that oppose Reason to Faith : Nor does he ever call Faith a Guide. He says, indeed, that Faith is the only Means to keep us Safe and Wise ; but that is, because it is to be guided by Revelation, upon which it may depend without being deceived. And what colour is there for saying he requires Faith without Reason, when he confines Faith for its Object wholly and solely to the Word of God, which carries in it all the Reasons of Believing ? When he says, That though many things Revealed are Mysterious, yet *still it is the highest Act of Reason, to believe him that cannot deceive us* : and when he says, That although the things Revealed (particularly concerning the Divine Essence) seem to be incredible ; yet this seeming Incredibility is no balk to Faith, for this Reason, *Because, If what is Revealed concerning God were always adapted to our Comprehension, how could it reach, or with any fitness represent that Nature which we allow to be Incomprehensible ?*

So that whereas this Gentleman gleans out scraps of Sentences to possess his Reader that Mr. T. always speaks absurdly ; had he but been so ingenuous as to take in Antecedents

and Consequents, he might have sav'd himself the pains of so much Prevarication, and me of this Animadversion upon it.

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But because he accounts that *his Zeal for Faith is worth boasting of*, I suppose he is willing the World should be call'd in to be Witness of this Zeal of his.

And wherein then does it appear? He defines Faith to be *an Assent of the Mind to something that is Credible, as Credible, upon the evident Motives of Credibility*. Now had he humbled himself to say with St. Paul, *that Faith comes by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*; or, that Faith is an Assent to what God has Revealed: This, perhaps, would have been beneath and unbecoming the Philosophical Air of his Style. Some perhaps will say this: but others will be apt to say, That it had been short of his purpose, who, by the loose latitude he leaves to every Man to determine, (1.) what is Credible, and, (2.) what are the evident Motives of Credibility, seemingly designs to leave every one at discretion to believe nothing but what he pleases.

In the next place, ---- As to the more determinate Object of Faith, What does he
say

say it is ? Why, it is even what Reason can pick out. Only, because we are not able to spin out all Truths meerly out of our own Understanding, without any other Help, (which is the humblest Concession that he has stoop'd to in his whole Treatise :) Therefore Reason must apply for these Helps : And whither ? Why, (1.) *To the Works of Creation.* 'Tis true, St. Paul tells the Heathens, That they might learn God and his Providence from the Works of the Creation ; but he never sends Christians for their Learning thither. For how jejune are the Instructions of the Book of Nature, after we once know the Book of God ? But we must suppose that this was intended as a favourable Reserve for some of his Clients, who own no other Book but that of Nature.

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Well, as for the Others, he allows them to go farther for another Help, telling us that there are some Men inspired with the Holy Ghost, who are to inform our Reasons what they are to believe and do. But who those are, he leaves it to the Discretion of others to determine ; for he never vouchsafes to name either Prophets, or Apostles, or Our Lord Jesus himself :

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self : From which disdainful looseness of his Intimation, he leaves us to apprehend these Two things ; (1.) That he believes Our Lord to have been *no more above a Man, than any of the Inspired* ; and, (2.) That he intends to bring all Pretenders to Inspiration upon a level : so that the *Turks* and *Indians* may as well build Faith upon *Mahomet* and *Confucius*, as *Christians* may upon the Bible. And this is enough to entitle him to that Zeal for Faith he thinks fit to boast of.

III. The Third Charge is, *That Mr. Y. has vilified and rejected the only Faculty that God has given us to judge of things by.*

And yet I will undertake, on the contrary, That Mr. Y. has given Reason its entire due.

The Remarker thought fit to cite *Prov. 20. 27.* for the honour of its Original ; Mr. Y. had done the same before ; and shewn, withal how far it serv'd the *Gentiles* towards Natural Religion ; and how far it may now serve Reveal'd Religion, both by Confirming Believers, and bringing Unbelievers to the acknowledgment of the Gospel. But he warns Men likewise, that Reason has been all along so Opinionative, that

that it has frequently set it self up against God's Appointments, and opposed Revelation, either by Distrusting, or Rejecting, or Perverting, or Refining it away; and if to say and prove this, (as Mr. T. has done by undeniable Instances,) be to vilifie Reason, let it be still more vile.

On the other hand, the *Remarker* in his Panegyricks upon Reason, puts me in mind of a Man upon a Bogg, who continually changes his footing, because standing long upon the same Turff, would expose him to sink. Thus it is that he before (p. 3.) calls Reason a *Guide*; and here (p. 4.) a *Judge*; anon (p. 6.) a *Counsellor*. Now, whatever Advantage he proposes by this shuffling of Terms, let us but consider the distinct Notions of a Guide, and of a Judge; and that will be sufficient to expose the Sophistry of all his Arguing. A Guide must be Despotick, and have absolute Submission, otherwise he can do no good in his Place; but a Judge is nothing so; he himself is Guided, and the Law is his Guide, which he must abide by; and his Reason only serves him to know what is Law, and to apply it to Fact. Should every Judge have in his Commission to be likewise a Legislator,

flator, we should have but a sorry account of Publick Justice. And so were Reason to form the Scheme of what we are to believe, or to reform Revelation, whereby (thro' God's goodness) we have it done to our hands, we must expect the same sorry issue in Religion.

But because it is nauseous to follow this Remarker in his Maze of Trifling, I will chuse to sit down a little, and tell a Story.

Once upon a time, *Anthades* being upon a Journey, was met by *Enpithes*, who after a Friendly Salutation, ask'd him whither he was Travelling? Whither I am Travelling, (quoth *Anthades*) that is a pretty familiar Question, however I will Answer it (because) I am Travelling to *Hagiopolis*. God speed you thither, (reply'd *Enpithes*,) *Hagiopolis* is a very Entertaining Place; but would you give me patience, I would ask whether you know the way thither? Do you question my Knowledge too, says *Anthades*? 'tis so you show your breeding; but know Sir, I have Eyes, and Eyes that have guided me hitherto, and never led me out of my way; and therefore I need no other Conduct for my present Journey.

Eyes are useful to Travellers (reply'd *Eupithes*) but (with submission) how can they lead you in a way where you are altogether a Stranger? For Example, Your way lies by yonder Mountain, and your Eyes may possibly lead you thither, because you have it in your view; but when you come beyond that, the Way is perfectly intricate and obscure, and therefore, if you will be safe, you must necessarily take a Guide. I take a Guide? (reply'd *Anthades*,) thou Trifler, the Advice is an Affront to me, 'tis an express *Declamation against Eye-sight, the best faculty that Heaven has bestow'd upon Travellers.* Must I take a Guide? then farewell *Eye-sight, and welcome Blindness; Faculty away, we have no use for you.* Pardon me, Sir, I beseech you (says *Eupithes*) I would not have you put out your Eyes, they will be still of use to you to discern and follow your Guide; but if they pretend to lead, they must mislead you. Eyes mislead (reply'd *Anthades*) thou hast not the least taste of Philosophy, Eyes cannot mislead. The most accurate Philosopher of all my Acquaintance, uses to say of Reason, *that Reason cannot misguide, because if it does misguide, it is*

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not Reason, it is only Inconsideration, Rashness, and Presumption; and I say the same of Eyes, if they mislead, they are not Eyes, they are only Balls stuff'd up with that kind of Ingredients. I am not expert at your Sophistry (reply'd Eupithes) but I heartily wish your welfare, and therefore think my self oblig'd to make you aware of an Instance, wherein I know not how your Eyes can avoid mistaking. The Road is distinguish'd by several Mercuries, some White, some Yellow; the Yellow point out the Right Turnings, and the White those that must be avoided. Now, Sir, I observe that your Eyes are tinctur'd with the Jaundice; and notwithstanding that, give me leave to say, they are Eyes still; but being so affected, they will certainly mistake the Colour, and will appear to be Yellow. Still more deplorably Ignorant! (cries Anthades) Dost thou not know, that Eye-sight is the only Faculty that God has given us to judge of Colours by? and can Eyes mistake Colours? then surely we are very hardly dealt with. And so farewell, thou luckless Pretender to Advice.

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With this Farewel, on he Travels to the Mountain before him; and was no sooner come

come thither, but he was met by *Philander* ;
a Man who had devoted himself to Charita-
ble Offices, and therefore in compassion to
those that Travell'd to *Hagiopolis*, he made
his Abode there in a Cottage, offering his
Conduct to all that pass'd by ; and the same
he offer'd to *Anthades* : But he, observing
Philander's humble Personage, and mean Ha-
bit, and that his Air was not assuming (as
all theirs was, whom he was wont to admire)
despis'd the Overture, and told *Philander*, he
took it in scorn, that one of such a contempt-
ible appearance should pretend Information
to him : For (says he) know, that my very
Sagacity and first guess, amounts to a better
direction than I can expect from all thy pre-
tended Experience : But, in short, I take
thee for a Cheat, that lurkest here only to
catch the Reverence of those thou abusest ;
and such Cheats I perceive are very com-
mon.

Philander replies, Sir, I am very sorry you
will not give me leave to serve you ; but be-
fore we part, pray suffer one Question from
me : Are not you, Sir, (I pray) one of
that Family they call the *Deists* ? For I ob-
serve, that when any of them come this way,
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they always treat me on this very manner. I guess'd thou wast bold enough (cries *Anthades*) and now thou hast shew'd it; by reflecting upon such a Family of Gentlemen, whereof many are of great Worth, and Exact Philosophers: But I think it not convenient (as yet) to own my self One of them; and therefore, at least for a small Experiment of thy Skill, I will venture my self with thee, some part of my Journey. Sir, (reply'd *Philander*) it will be a pleasure to me to see you make a happy progress; but that you may do so, suffer my Advice, That you leave off this Opiniatry and Conceit, to which I perceive you have addicted your self; for I never knew any succeed in this way, that were not humble and tractable: Keep close to me therefore, and renounce your own Wisdom; neither Distrust me, nor Dispute with me; but remember that I am your Guide, and a Guide cannot profit without entire submission. What, Sir, (says *Anthades* in a rage) you my Guide? and I renounce my Wisdom? Know, Sir, that my Wisdom is as good as your own; Is yours from above? so is mine too; and I will not renounce it. And what? you my Guide? I thought

I thought (like a Thief as you look) you intended to steal this Honour from my Eyes, but you shall not; for know, I will never depart from this, *That my Eyes are my Guide*; and they shall have the Credit on't, at my Journey's end. Alas! (reply'd *Philander*) I fear we are not like to hold long together, and yet I will be as Indulgent to you as I can; I will therefore allow, that your Eyes shall (in a limited Sense) be call'd your Guide, but it is only to observe and follow me; for my self must be the Leader both of you, and your Eyes, or else you will never come to the End you presume upon. Sir, you are mistaken (reply'd *Anthades*) I have an Expedient for this too; for know, I will both Follow and Lead together: For tho' you go before, yet (take notice) I am Judge of your Discretion and Conduct; and when I like not the Road you lead me in, I shall oblige you to take to another; or else you must expect Correction from me. Oh! Now Sir, (says *Philander*) I am sure I know your Relations; they are those we call *Soci-nians*; whose fashion it is, when they come here for my direction, to take me violently by the shoulders, and if they like not the Path

Path I lead them in, they immediately force me to another, which they pretend to like better ; and so I lose all my pains upon them, and therefore am now willing to shift them, for my own quiet. I thought thou hadst no better Understanding (reply'd *Anthades*) for altho' I do not own my self of that Family neither at present, yet I must tell thee, they are Men of Noble Spirits, and free Enquirers into Truth ; and I would rather Err with their Ingenuous Freedom, than creep into Vassalage to thy *Pedantry* and Forms. And so Adieu.

This is the Story ; which may serve for the Plan of all the Matter in Dispute. The Offices of Eyes, without a Man, and of Reason within, are thoroughly parallel : I leave the rest of the Application to the Reader ; and to the *Remarker*, to make what Exceptions he thinks fit.

IV. The Fourth Charge is, *That Mr. Y. gives Papists advantage against Protestants, and Establishes the most pernicious Principles of Popery.*

And

And why should he not be Stoned for't, next time he passes? But sure Mr. Y. who obliges *Reason* to enquire into the Dictates of God, and to forbear its Own; who ties up Faith to the H. Scripture, and blames *Papists*, as much as others, for diminishing its Authority, is like to give very little advantage to the Popish Cause, and the *Remarker* as little to the Protestant; who, tho' Treating of the Guide in Religion, has never vouchsafed so much as once to pronounce, either *the Holy Scripture*, or *the word of God*, or *the Gospel of Christ*; Terms, which we have thought hitherto to be most ally'd to that Subject, as well as most endeared to Protestant Ears.

It is more to be apprehended, that He, who drives so fairly to set up Infallibility in every Man, will not be so ungentle upon occasion, as not to allow, that *One* may be Infallible in so large a Communion. And I am sure the Protestant Wisdom of all the past Age has been out, if the Man, who can let himself to be a Champion for *Seperatists*, and can prostitute all his Faculties to puzzle Truth (as the *Remarker* does) be not the best Factor for *Popery*.

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V. The Fifth Charge is, *That he likewise gives Deists and Socinians occasion to think ill of the Protestant Cause, and Principles.*

Alas, tender Man! what Charity he has for those that are in Error? even so much Charity, that he would not have them disturb'd out of the Principle that makes them so. He is angry with Mr. Y. for not Exhorting *Deists* and *Socinians* to hearken to *Reason* (p. 9.) while, instead of that, Mr. Y. was Exhorting them to hearken to the Gospel, and proving, that it is the highest Act of Reason to do so: 'Tis true, the *Remarker* says, that he has not done this with such Strength and Evidence as he might have done (p. 6.). Now indeed I thought Mr. Y. had done it well enough to save himself from blame; but since the *Remarker* thinks otherwise, 'tis but what we ought to expect from *his Zeal for Faith*, that he should perfect the Work by his own Undertaking.

VI. The Sixth Charge is, *That Mr. Y. contradicts himself, and sets up Reason for the Supreme Judge.*

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He that pleases himself with the Style of Speaking---If we cannot distinguish what is Contradictory, we are in a sad Case, and very hardly dealt with; as the Remarker does (p. 10.) methinks oblige himself to take care, as well for the honour of God, as for his own; that where he imputes a Contradiction, it should appear to be one: Yet the Remarker takes no such Care, when he Charges Mr. Y. with Contradicting himself; because in one place he denies Reason to be a Guide, and in another, allows it to be a Judge: The wide and different import of these two Notions (spoken of and repeated already) will easily discharge Mr. Y. from this Imputation. But let the Remarker discharge himself if he can, from a continued prevarication thro' all he has Written: Let him that Charges Mr. Y. so contemptuously for confounding the Notion of Wisdom (of which I think he is well acquitted) acquit himself for confounding so grossly the Notion of a Guide. The Proper and Vulgar Notion of a Guide, imports One that is to Conduct a Traveller in the Way to which he is a Stranger: And Reason being naturally as much a Stranger to Matters of Faith, lies under the necessity of having such

a Guide in those Matters. Now the *Remarker* never vouchsafes one Reflection upon this; but (quite contrary) sets up *Reason* to be its own Guide in these Matters that are confessedly beyond its reach. Had he barely a mind that *Reason* should be call'd a Guide in that limited and unusual Sense, wherein the Traveller's Eyes may be call'd his Guide, while they conduct him to his Leader: Mr. T. is not at all affected with his Combat, he only Fights with a Shadow of his own Listing; but if he calls *Reason* a Guide in the common sense of the word, or if he calls it *the Supreme Guide* in any sense, (as he does call it so expressly, p. 4.) what need has he any longer to disguise his Communion?

In a word---I can gather no other from what this Gentleman has said thro' all his *Remarks*, than this, (*viz.*) That he is an Infidious Friend to *Religion*; and it would be more honestly done, would he please to profess himself an open Enemy. Then, with a better face might he bring forth his *Achillæum*, and attack the *H. Scripture*, which is the Attempt he seems all along to itch at; or (at least) he might furnish us with more Interpretations, such as he has given us a Specimen

men of, upon 2 Cor. x. 5. and that will do his business as well.

VII. The Seventh Charge is, *That the only favourable Construction that can be put upon his declaiming against Reason, which is the main Design of his whole Book, is, to suppose he goes about to prove, what no body denieth.*

As for Declaiming against Reason, I must refer the Reader to the Story or Parable recited before, where he meets with the Parallel: But as for the *Remarker's* favourable Construction, I must tell him, That without any grains of his favour, there is no well-inform'd Christian that will deny what Mr. T. has asserted in these *Discourses*: And nevertheless he is beholden to the *Remarker* for denying it so far as he has done; because these *Discourses* must have lost Credit with better Men, had they been such as merited the Approbation of such a *Censor*. Of whom I now take leave, with this Advertisement----*That the Excellency of Reason is no more an Argument against the Wisdom of Believing, than the Excellency of Writing is an Argument for a Man to Write against his Creed.*----

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his business as well.

VII. The Seventh Charge is, That the only
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Dilemma against Reason, which is the main
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about to prove, that no body doubts.

For D. claiming against Reason, I must
refer the Reader to the story of Parable re-
cited before, where he meets with the Paral-
lel: But as for the Remarkable Con-
fession, I must tell him, That without any
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